

Unique People Services



34th Anniversary Gala

Restoring Hope, Building Homes

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Marina del Rey

2026 Gala Journal

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE. PROVIDING HOMES.
SERVING COMMUNITIES.

Gala Program

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

**34th Anniversary Gala:
Restoring Hope, Building Homes**

6:00 PM | Cocktail Hour and Networking

Live music and silent auction

7:00 PM | Welcome and Opening

Poem

Arts and Crafts by Dawn G.

Welcome from the Gala Committee Co-Chairs

Master of Ceremonies

Pedro Rivera, ABC7 Journalist

Remarks from Executive Director

Yvette Brissett-André

Honoring Our Community

Individual of the Year

Lynn Wonsang Award

Brick of Change Award

Building Futures Award

8:00 PM | Dinner

Evening Program Continues

UPS Community Award

Closing Remarks from Board Chair

Nathaniel M. Montgomery

Live Music and Dancing

2026 UPS Honorees

UPS Community Award

Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx
Borough President



Lynn Wonsang Award

Barbara Lehrer, President &
Founder, The Beacon Group



Brick of Change Award

Dr. Lidia Virgil, Chief Operating
Officer, SOMOS Community Care



Building Futures Award:

Ben Werzberger, President,
Building Envelope Solutions Inc.
and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC



Individual of the Year

Cleo W.



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 34th Anniversary Gala of Unique People Services, and thank you for being here.

Since 1991, Unique People Services has served people who have too often been turned away elsewhere, providing safe housing and supportive services with respect and without judgment. Today, more than 1,000 individuals live in our supportive housing programs across the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

This year's theme, Restoring Hope, Building Homes, speaks to the work ahead. Building on Lynn's Place and 2050 Grand Concourse, we are preparing to open Ogden Theater Apartments at 1415 Ogden Avenue and to complete our development at 1806 Anthony Avenue, adding nearly 200 affordable and supportive homes in the Bronx.

Tonight we honor five people whose leadership and commitment strengthen our community, and we thank our staff, who carry this mission every day.

Every ticket, sponsorship, journal ad, and auction bid supports the people we serve. Thank you for standing with us.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel Montgomery, MPA
Board Chair



Yvette Brissett-André, MPA
Executive Director

Yvette Brissett-André, MPA

Executive Director



Yvette Brissett-André joined Unique People Services (UPS) in 2008 and serves as Executive Director/CEO. She oversees an annual budget exceeding \$50 million and a workforce of more than 300 employees. Her expertise includes finance and budgeting, program development, contract negotiation, affordable housing development, and proposal writing.

Under Yvette's leadership, UPS has grown from a \$16 million organization by securing major government contracts and expanding its continuum of housing and supportive services. She has also played an instrumental role in the development of Lynn's Place and the 96-unit mixed-use affordable housing development at 2050 Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

Yvette currently serves as Treasurer of InUnity Alliance, Vice chair of Mental Health News Educational , Interagency Council (IAC), The Supportive Housing Network of New York (SHNNY), The Fortune Society and has provided leadership to several nonprofit organizations Her honors include the SmartCEO Brava Award, the Bronx Chamber of Commerce's Best of the Bronx Award, and the Schneps Media Power Women of the Bronx Award.

Yvette holds a Master of Public Administration from Baruch College and a Bachelor of Science from SUNY Plattsburgh. She is also a National Urban Fellow and was among the first participants in the America's Leaders for Change program. Yvette is married to Donavon Andre and is the proud mother of two sons, David and Darius.

Nathaniel M. Montgomery, MPA

Board Chair



Nathaniel Montgomery serves as Chief Housing Development Officer for Brisa Builders Development LLC. As Chief Housing Development Officer he is responsible for developing and managing relationships with local economic development partners including community-based organizations, other mission-driven developers, impact investors, financial institutions, and local/state agencies to manage the organization's pipeline of real estate projects that foster inclusive economic development. He assesses project feasibility, underwrites and develops finance strategies, advises on the selection and coordination of third-party consultants, and accesses financing through public subsidies and conventional sources. He also conducts financial modeling for all types of real estate transactions and identifies potential sources of financing, including pre-development loans, construction and permanent loans, tax-exempt bonds, IDA bonds, and New Market Tax Credits.

Mr. Montgomery has secured over \$100 million in financing for both residential and commercial development projects. Over the years he has been tremendously successful in coordinating, negotiating, planning, constructing, and managing residential and commercial development projects. He has experience in developing special needs, low-moderate, middle, and market rate residential development projects. Mr. Montgomery is proficient in the use of bond financing, government subsidies, New York State and Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

Mr. Montgomery has held several professional positions throughout his real estate development career. He has served as Senior Vice President for the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SOBRO); Director of Real Estate Development for Brand New Day, Inc.; Director of Real Estate Development for VOCM; and Senior Project Manager for Isles, Inc. He holds certifications in Real Estate Development Finance and Economic Development Finance from the National Development Corporation (NDC). Mr. Montgomery holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning (MA) and a Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA). Mr. Montgomery is also a graduate of the National Urban Fellows leadership program.

Master of Ceremonies



Pedro Rivera
WABC-TV Eyewitness News

Pedro Rivera is an Emmy and LA Press Club Award-winning journalist, who co-anchors Eyewitness News This Morning and Eyewitness News Mornings at 10 on weekday mornings for WABC in New York City. Pedro first joined WABC as the weekend morning anchor.

Prior to returning to New York, Pedro anchored weeknights for KTLA 5 News at 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. in Los Angeles. He reported on the Robb Elementary School mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas and the Camp Fire in Northern California, the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in the state's history. Pedro co-hosted KTLA's WeHo Pride, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Rose Parade specials. Before KTLA, Pedro was the weekday morning anchor and reporter at KTXL in Sacramento.

Before heading to the West Coast, Pedro was a reporter at KHBS/KHOG in Fort Smith, Arkansas and was a news photographer and editor at WFSB in Hartford, Connecticut. National stories that Pedro covered included the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, Blizzard Nemo, and the Boston Marathon bombing.

Born in the Bronx, Pedro's journey began in New York City. He earned his bachelor's degree in communications from Pace University in Pleasantville. During his time at Pace, he interned at WABC-TV, where he had the unique opportunity to interview sports legends Bob Gibson, Joe Torre, and Ron Guidry.

A proud New York City native, Pedro is not only committed to reporting and delivering the news but also staying active with his alma mater, Pace University, where he serves on the advisory board for Dyson College of Arts and Sciences. Pedro is also co-chair of the Afro Latino Task Force for the National Association for Hispanic Journalists. When off the air, Pedro enjoys watching his favorite sports teams, including the Yankees, Eagles, Rangers, and Hornets.

Pedro is also a wine enthusiast, so if you have any restaurant recommendations, shoot him a message.

2026 Honorees

UPS Community Award: **Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson,** **Bronx Borough President**



Vanessa L. Gibson was elected as the 14th Bronx Borough President on November 2, 2021, and re-elected on November 4, 2025, entrusted with serving the borough's vibrant and diverse population of over 1.4 million residents.

A proud native New Yorker, Ms. Gibson has dedicated her career to serving the people of the West Bronx. Her journey began in January 2001, when she joined the New York State Assembly Intern Program while a student at the University at Albany. She was assigned to work with then-Assemblywoman Aurelia Greene, where she gained invaluable experience engaging in legislative work, attending meetings, and connecting with constituents and community groups.

After graduating, Ms. Gibson transitioned into the role of Legislative Aide and later District Manager, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Assembly office. She managed staff and ensured effective constituent services. Following Assemblywoman Greene's resignation in May 2009 after 28 years in office, Ms. Gibson ran for the New York State Assembly, winning a special election on June 2, 2009, to represent the 77th District.

During her two terms in the Assembly, Ms. Gibson advocated for crucial issues affecting her community. In 2013, she ran for an open seat in the New York City Council, succeeding the term-limited Council Member Helen Diane Foster. She was elected to the Council in November 2013.

As a Council Member, Ms. Gibson became a leading voice in key areas such as education, affordable housing, public safety, and criminal justice reform. She championed alternatives to incarceration, tenant protections, and enhanced police training. She made history as the first African American woman to chair the New York City Council Public Safety Committee. In 2017, Ms. Gibson worked with then-Council Member Mark Levine to pass the landmark Right to Counsel legislation, providing free legal representation for low-income tenants facing eviction in Housing Court. She also led efforts to establish a comprehensive, ten-year

food strategy for New York City, focusing on improving access to healthy food, supporting community gardens, and addressing food deserts.

In 2020, Ms. Gibson announced her candidacy for Bronx Borough President, bringing forward a vision to tackle pressing issues including public safety, food equity, housing insecurity, health and wellness, gender equity, and support for the LGBTQIA+ community. After securing victories in both the primary and general elections, she made history again as the first woman and the first African American to hold the office of Bronx Borough President.

Since taking office, Borough President Gibson has launched numerous initiatives to improve the lives of Bronx residents. She spearheaded a campaign to combat hunger and improve nutrition, working in partnership with local farmers' markets. Recognizing the importance of bridging the digital divide, she secured over \$50 million in capital funding to enhance technology in Bronx schools, ensuring students have access to modern learning tools. She has also championed efforts to reimagine the historic Kingsbridge Armory, with plans to transform it into an economic powerhouse for the borough.

Borough President Gibson has been a staunch advocate for public safety. She works closely with the New York City Police Department, anti-gun violence organizations, and violence interrupters to reduce crime and create safer communities. Her initiatives include securing funding for security cameras and advocating for stronger fire safety laws following the devastating Twin Parks fire. Additionally, she hosts fire safety workshops to raise awareness about prevention.

Borough President Gibson is also working closely with the New York State Department of Labor to create pathways to employment for job seekers across the borough. By connecting residents with job opportunities and providing workforce development resources, she aims to reduce unemployment and help individuals build sustainable careers.

She also collaborates with the Bronx Economic Development Corporation to offer financial support to struggling businesses, helping them recover and flourish in a post-pandemic economy.

Through her leadership and tireless commitment to the Bronx, Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson continues to shape a brighter future for the borough and its residents.

Lynn Wonsang Award: Barbara Lehrer, President & Founder, The Beacon Group



“Make your own rose garden!” These simple yet powerful words, spoken by her mother, became the guiding principle of Barbara Lehrer’s life. For Barbara, however, success has never been measured solely by the roses she cultivated for herself, but by the opportunities she has created for others to flourish. As the founder of The Beacon Group, Barbara has dedicated her career to helping individuals overcome challenges, achieve independence, and build brighter futures.

The roots of Barbara’s passion for service were planted early. Her mother, Sylvia Martin, was a respected speech pathologist who devoted her professional life to helping individuals with communication disorders find their voices and unlock their potential. Inspired by her mother’s compassion and commitment, Barbara followed a similar path after graduating from Hofstra University, embarking on what would become more than four decades of service as a speech language pathologist.

In the early years of her career, Barbara traveled wherever she was needed, providing speech and language therapy to children and adults from all walks of life. From Brooklyn neighborhoods to Long Island communities, she worked tirelessly to ensure that quality care was accessible to those who needed it most. Her dedication extended into special education classrooms through regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) programs, where she gained valuable insight into the challenges facing schools, families, and individuals with disabilities. Driven to make a broader impact, Barbara returned to Hofstra University to earn certification in School Administration, expanding her ability to advocate for meaningful change.

Yet Barbara’s vision extended far beyond traditional systems of care. She recognized that individuals with disabilities needed more than clinical services; they needed compassionate, well-trained professionals who could support them in their homes, communities, and everyday lives.

In 2006, Barbara identified a critical gap in services and launched The Beacon Group's Direct Support Professional (DSP) staffing program. Refusing to settle for the standards of a typical staffing agency, she established a model built on rigorous training, certification, and a deep commitment to quality care. What began as a small operation serving only a handful of sites has since grown into a thriving workforce of more than 500 active Direct Support Professionals serving programs throughout New York City's five boroughs, Long Island, and Westchester County.

Barbara's leadership was perhaps most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when healthcare and human service providers faced unprecedented staffing shortages and operational challenges. While many organizations struggled to meet growing demands, Barbara worked relentlessly to ensure that the individuals relying on Beacon-supported services would not be left behind. She implemented staff incentive programs, secured and distributed thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE), and provided unwavering support to frontline workers.

Her efforts helped countless Direct Support Professionals remain safe, motivated, and equipped to continue delivering essential care during one of the most difficult periods in recent history.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Barbara remains deeply committed to giving back. To honor the legacy of her mother, she established the Sylvia Martin Memorial Scholarship at Hofstra University. The scholarship supports students pursuing careers in law, speech-language pathology, or audiology, particularly those who have faced personal challenges themselves, empowering the next generation of advocates and professionals.

Today, Barbara Lehrer is recognized as a visionary leader in healthcare and human services. Her career stands as a testament to the power of compassion, innovation, and perseverance. Through The Beacon Group, she has not only built an organization—she has built opportunities, strengthened communities, and transformed the lives of thousands of individuals with disabilities and the professionals who support them.

Like the rose garden her mother encouraged her to create, Barbara's legacy continues to grow, bringing hope, opportunity, and lasting impact to all those it touches.



Brick of Change Award: **Dr. Lidia Virgil, Chief Operating Officer, SOMOS Community Care**

Dr. Lidia Virgil is an accomplished Dominican doctor and businesswoman. She is the Chief Operations Officer of SOMOS Community Care. She is the daughter of Fresa Indiana Villalona and Rafael Felipe Castro, both from Monte Cristi, Dominican Republic. Her father was an active and founding member of the revolutionary movement “14 de Junio” who, with his life being in danger, received political asylum in the United States.

Lidia is strong and dedicated to what she believes in, a trait that she inevitably inherited and groomed from her father. She graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx, after which she went back to her native Dominican Republic to study Medicine at the first University of the Americas, Santo Tomas de Aquino, now the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo, where she received her degree as Doctor of Medicine. At the university, she also studied Business Administration at the behest of her father, having the intention of transforming the health delivery to the people that need it most and helping the medical professional achieve better outcomes.

In 1992 when healthcare was changing in the U.S. she studied medical economics, coding, and auditing to ensure that medical provider coding and documentation at the practices she worked with was up to par and services were performed appropriately. Lidia has worked to increase the value of health care practices and transform the delivery of care within these practices throughout several areas of the U.S.

She transformed a primary care family practice in South Florida into a full urgent care center with a full radiology department and pharmacy. Patients could walk in with a problem and walk out fully diagnosed and treated without ever needing to go to a hospital or waiting until morning to receive care. Later, in Brooklyn, she built another urgent care center and developed a Care Transitions program that has helped thousands avoid hospital re-admissions, a program which she later reproduced throughout New York City with a base in Manhattan.

In 2011 Dr. Lidia Virgil wrote and implemented a grant received from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid called Independence at Home which allowed better care for homebound patients while saving millions of dollars for the Federal Government's Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Lidia was one of the original five who avidly worked in the creation of SOMOS Community Care. She worked tirelessly along with her four other colleagues and their leader, Dr. Ramon Tallaj, to develop New York State's only Physician-led Performing Provider System. She used her great clinical acumen to put together a project implementation plan that has been successful in transforming the care of the most vulnerable and displaced New Yorkers.

With SOMOS, and in line with her heartfelt beliefs and dedication, she has worked throughout the COVID pandemic in the community while others were home observing quarantine to design processes and implement screenings and testing in several settings throughout the community. These projects include testing at churches, schools, and community centers, among others. She also worked with the New York Stock Exchange to help keep it open and running.

But everything is not just work for Lidia: she is also a strong religious woman who donates hours to teaching and serving others. She has a degree as a Master of Theology obtained from Saint Joseph's College. Lidia spends hours serving through church events and food pantries and works with a nonprofit foundation, FAFE, which supports children and the elderly in her native Dominican Republic. Lidia goes twice a year on Medical Mission trips to the Dominican Republic, in which not only do they deliver medical and dental care to a highly vulnerable and needy community but also give every patient the medications that he/she needs for care at absolutely no cost.

She continues to work on a healthcare system that provides better care to vulnerable populations and is working on the implementation of the value-based payment program through the application of quality processes across hundreds of practices in New York City. Her goal is to be a part of a community in which the poorest patients receive top-level care and the physicians are not overburdened but rather highly compensated for better outcomes, providing higher quality of life for both.

Building Futures Award: **Ben Werzberger, President,** **Building Envelope Solutions Inc.** **and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC**



Ben Werzberger began his career in the construction industry as a roofing and façade contractor, where he developed a strong foundation in building systems, project execution, and quality craftsmanship. Through years of hands-on experience managing complex construction projects, he gained a comprehensive understanding of every stage of the building process. That experience laid the groundwork for his transition into real estate development, allowing him to bring practical construction knowledge to every project he undertakes.

Today, Ben continues to lead Building Envelope Solutions, a full-service roofing and façade contracting company serving the New York metropolitan area. The company specializes in all types of roofing systems, façade restoration, waterproofing, exterior envelope construction, and related building envelope solutions for residential, commercial, and institutional properties.

Building on decades of construction experience, Ben expanded into real estate development through BW Anthony, where he focuses on the development of affordable and supportive housing that creates lasting value for communities. His expertise spans project planning, site acquisition, financing coordination, entitlement and permitting, construction oversight, and successful project execution.

Among his notable developments is 1806 Anthony Avenue in the Bronx, a 111-unit affordable and supportive housing community developed in partnership with Unique People Services. The project reflects Ben's belief that quality development can strengthen neighborhoods while expanding access to safe, affordable housing for individuals and families in need.

Throughout his career, Ben has remained committed to responsible development that balances sound business practices with meaningful community impact. His work demonstrates that successful development extends beyond constructing buildings—it is about creating opportunities, fostering stability, and helping communities thrive for generations to come.

Unique People Services is proud to recognize Ben Werzberger for his partnership, leadership, and dedication to advancing affordable housing and community development. His vision, integrity, and commitment to building stronger communities have made him a valued partner in helping fulfill UPS's mission of understanding people, providing homes, and serving communities.

Individual of the Year

Cleo W.



Cleo W. has been a resident in UPS supportive housing since January 2024, and in that time she has become one of the building's most familiar and beloved faces. She pays her rent on time every month, shows up for group activities whenever she can, and is known throughout the building, by security, maintenance, and home health aides alike, for stopping to say hello.

Born in Manhattan and raised in the Bronx, Cleo is a proud mother and grandmother of nine grandchildren, and family is at the center of her life. She loves to travel to see her children, having visited Florida, West Virginia, North Carolina, and New Jersey, with the Poconos as her favorite escape from the city. When she's not traveling, she enjoys catching new movie releases, going to concerts, and going out to eat at buffets with her husband.

Cleo's journey is one of real perseverance. She has faced significant personal and health challenges over the years, and has met them with a steadiness and determination that her case manager, Brandon Parks, describes as remarkable. She keeps every medical appointment, whether it's the doctor, the dentist, or the eye doctor, and she stays actively committed to her own healing and growth rather than letting setbacks define her.

That same commitment shows up in how she engages with her community. She's a regular presence at UPS luncheons and monthly group activities, not just attending but genuinely participating alongside her peers. She follows the building's policies and never hesitates to reach out to her case manager for support when she needs it, modeling exactly the kind of engagement UPS hopes to see.

Beyond that, Cleo has become a source of strength for the people around her. She's someone neighbors turn to for advice or simply to talk to, generous with food, warmth, or a joke when someone needs to smile. Brandon says he has never once seen her upset or discouraged; her energy is consistently upbeat and uplifting. That combination, personal resilience paired with genuine care for others, is what makes Cleo W. a natural choice for Individual of the Year.

Our Supporters

\$34,000 +

Beacon Group Therapy Services
SOMOS Community Care

\$20,000 +

Bayview Developers
BW Anthony Ave. Holdings
LAMB Insurance Services

\$10,000 +

Atlantic Tomorrow Bruno
Frustaci Contracting
Community Care Rx
National Standard Abstract

\$5,000 +

Ffriend Enterprises Ltd.
Newman Design
Ponce Bank
Reno & Cavanaugh, PLLC
Sycamore Birch Management
Westminster-U.S.A. Ltd./Kesten Charitable Trust



List current as of 10/6/26.

\$2,500 +

Anything Pixel
Benchmark Title Agency
Bottom Line Concepts LLC
CityScape Engineering
Constructive Partnerships Unlimited
Daybright | Long Island Employee Benefits Group
Enterprise Fleet Mgmt., Inc
Goldstein Hall PLLC
Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. (HCCI)
Long Island Employee Benefits Group
NCV Capital Partners
Newman Design
Red Stone Equity Partners
Shinda Management Corp.

**\$1,000 –
\$2,499**

Aflac / Mass Mutual
Aufgang Architects
Briason Associates
Bronx People's Choice Furniture
Claire Brown, Board Member
EIHAB Human Services
Emarhol Electric Corp.
Epiphany Staing and HR Consulting
Services, LLC
Gibson Dunn
Dr.Klonette Johnson, Unique People Services
Mega Contracting Group LLC
Mercy Home
MHH Clinical Services PLLC
Midtown Plumbing & Heating Corp
MirRam Group
Nathaniel Montgomery, Board Chair
Phoenix House
Purpose by Design Architects
Sasha Rush
The Fortune Society
Tryax Realty Management
U S A F Int Export
Vassalotti Associates Architects
Yvette Brissett-Andre, Unique People Services

Citations and Proclamations



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

October 14, 2026

Unique People Services
201 East Burnside Avenue
Bronx, NY 10457

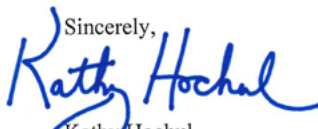
Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to send greetings to everyone gathered for the Unique People Services 34th anniversary gala.

Since its founding, Unique People Services has supported underserved individuals and families, including those affected by HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and developmental disabilities. By promoting social integration and personal independence through resources such as community housing, substance abuse counseling, and case management, Unique People Services offers accessible opportunities for individuals' long-term growth.

Today, you come together to commemorate your 34th anniversary and acknowledge those who have demonstrated their commitment to your mission. I join in recognizing these distinguished honorees. On behalf of all New Yorkers, I am grateful for your dedication to creating a more prosperous state.

Best wishes for an enjoyable event.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hochul
Governor



**Certificate of special
Congressional Recognition**

Presented to

Unique People Services

34th Anniversary Gala, "Restoring Hope, Building Homes"

On behalf of the constituents of the Eighth Congressional District of New York, I proudly salute Unique People Services, an organization dedicated to providing a home and supportive resources to vulnerable members of our community.

October 14, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hakeem Jeffries".

HAKEEM JEFFRIES
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



October 14, 2026

Dear Friend,

It is my pleasure to extend my warmest greetings to Unique People Services (UPS) as you gather for your 34th Anniversary Gala under the theme, "Restoring Hope, Building Homes."

Since 1991, UPS has provided supportive housing and services to more than 1,000 New Yorkers each year, serving without judgment those who have too often been denied compassionate care elsewhere. At a time when our borough faces an ongoing housing crisis, that mission has never been more vital.

Congratulations to Barbara Lehrer, recipient of the Lynn Wonsang Award; Ben Werzberger, recipient of the Building Futures Award; Dr. Lidia Virgil, recipient of the Brick of Change Award; and Cleo W., this year's Individual of the Year. Through their leadership and example, they reflect the very best of the Bronx and have helped ensure that our neighbors in need have somewhere to turn.

I am especially proud to congratulate my friend, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, on receiving the UPS Community Award. As the first woman and the first African American elected Bronx Borough President, Vanessa has made history while never losing sight of the families she serves. Since our days together on the New York City Council, where she helped pass the landmark Right to Counsel law for low-income tenants facing eviction, I have been grateful to call her a partner in serving the Bronx.

On behalf of the people of New York's 15th Congressional District, congratulations to UPS and all of tonight's honorees. I wish you a memorable evening and many more years of service to the Bronx.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ritchie Torres".

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress
NY-15, The Bronx



**Office of the New York
Attorney General**

**Letitia James
Attorney General**

October 14, 2026

Unique People Services
Administrative Office
201 East Burnside Avenue
Bronx, New York 10457

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to offer a warm welcome to all who have gathered to celebrate Unique People Services' 34th anniversary. Your participation not only supports UPS's important mission, but also pays tribute to the exceptional individuals being honored this evening.

Founded in 1991, UPS has provided compassionate and considerate care to individuals struggling with special and challenging needs, regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, developmental level, health status, or criminal or substance-use history. By offering services such as the HIV/AIDS Housing Program, a variety of developmental trainings, and medical and psychiatric monitoring, UPS focuses on helping people achieve the highest level of independent living. From its humble beginnings, your esteemed organization has grown to host more than 1,000 individuals in its shelters each year. I commend UPS for building a healthy, strong, and supportive environment designed to meet the emotional, physical, and social needs of individuals with special needs.

Let me also take this opportunity to join you in applauding this year's honorees. Congratulations to all of you on being recognized by this distinguished organization for your accomplishments.

Again, best wishes to everyone attending tonight's celebration. I am sure it will be an enjoyable occasion. I wish UPS continued success with its future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Letitia James". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Letitia" and the last name "James" clearly distinguishable.

LETITIA JAMES



**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



NATHALIA FERNANDEZ
SENATOR, 34TH DISTRICT

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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-3595

DISTRICT OFFICE
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BRONX, NEW YORK 10465
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EMAIL
FERNANDEZ@NYSenate.GOV
@SENFERNANDEZ34



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to congratulate Unique People Services on the occasion of your 34th Anniversary Gala, "Restoring Hope, Building Homes."

For more than three decades, UPS has provided supportive housing and essential services that help individuals and families find stability, opportunity, and a path forward. Your work reflects the difference that compassionate, community-centered support can make in people's lives.

As you celebrate 34 years of service, I commend the staff, leadership, supporters, and partners who continue to advance this important mission throughout the Bronx and beyond.

Congratulations on this milestone, and best wishes for many more years of restoring hope and building stronger communities.

Best Regards,
Nathalia Fernandez

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathalia Fernandez".

New York State Senator for District 34



JEFFREY DINOWITZ
Assemblyman 81st District
Bronx County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN
Codes Committee

COMMITTEES
Rules
Ways and Means
Health
Election Law

MEMBER
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

CHAIRMAN
Bronx Delegation

October 14, 2026

Unique People Services
201 East Burnside Avenue Floor 2
Bronx, NY 10457

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to join in supporting your 34th Anniversary Gala. Unique People Services (UPS) provides outstanding service to people in our Bronx community and is a model for permanent and supportive housing programs. I commend UPS for their commitment to demonstrating their mission – to serve those who may have been denied compassionate and considerate treatment elsewhere due to their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, developmental level, health status or criminal or substance use history.

For 34 years, UPS has serviced Bronxites, providing some of our most vulnerable neighbors; formerly homeless individuals, those living with HIV/AIDS, or people living with mental illness or disabilities with support services that include case management and focusing on achieving the highest possible level of independent living.

I also want to congratulate your honorees, Vanessa L. Gibson, Malik Yoba, Barbara Lehrer, and Lidia Virgil. I can vouch for my colleague Borough President Gibson's dedication and commitment for fighting for each and every Bronxite. UPS shares this mission to house 1,000 individuals per year, in the Bronx and elsewhere throughout the city. Their dedication to providing a home and supportive services to people with special and challenging needs is admirable and important work that deserves recognition.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz
Member of Assembly



LANDON C. DAIS
Assemblymember 77th
District Bronx County

THE ASSEMBLY STATE
OF NEW YORK ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Banks
Cities
Economic Development, Job
Creation, Commerce and
Industry
Energy
Housing
Small Business

Congratulations to Unique Peoples Services on 34 years of dedicated service to our community, the Bronx, and New York City.

For more than three decades, Unique Peoples Services has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to empowering underserved communities and providing vital developmental disability and mental health services to residents across our city. Your work has helped countless individuals and families access the support, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Thirty-four years is a tremendous milestone and one worthy of recognition. This anniversary is a testament to the organization's longstanding commitment to service and to the countless staff, families, and community members who have contributed to its success.

On behalf of the residents of the 77th Assembly District, congratulations to Unique Peoples Services on this important anniversary. We celebrate your 34 years of service and look forward to all that you will continue to accomplish in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. C. Dais".

Landon C. Dais
Member of the New York State Assembly
77th Assembly District



OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT
The Bronx County Building
851 Grand Concourse, Suite 301, Third Floor
Bronx, NY 10451

October 14, 2026

Dear Unique People Services (UPS) Team and Honorees,

I am proud to extend my warmest greetings and congratulations as you celebrate your 34th Anniversary Gala - *A Celebration of Housing*. This occasion marks an important moment for our community, and I am grateful for the opportunity to join you in celebrating and recognizing its significance.

For more than 30 years, UPS has provided critical services to individuals and families across the Bronx, offering compassionate care, housing, and opportunities that help people live with dignity and independence. Your dedication continues to transform lives every day by ensuring that some of our most vulnerable neighbors are met with care, support, and opportunity.

As you commemorate your 34th anniversary, I am humbled to be honored alongside incredible community leaders and partners who share a vision of affordable, high-quality, and stable housing for all Bronx residents. I encourage you to take pride in your accomplishments and in the collective work that has allowed your mission to flourish. Our borough thrives when we have leaders like Executive Director and CEO Yvette Brissett-Andre and her team at UPS, who work tirelessly and collaboratively to improve the lives of all Bronx residents.

Congratulations once again, and I extend my best wishes for continued success and growth.

Sincerely,

Vanessa L. Gibson
Bronx Borough President



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
JULIE MENIN
SPEAKER

October 14, 2026

Dear Friends:

As the Speaker of the New York City Council, I am delighted to extend my personal greetings to everyone gathered here tonight for Unique People Services' (UPS) 34th Anniversary Gala.

Nonprofits are the heart and soul of our communities, responding to urgent needs, complementing the work of city agencies, and helping to ensure no one in our city is ever left behind.

Their shared commitment to improving the lives of others embodies the very spirit of New York City – a city that was founded as much on courage as on kindness, where we care for one another and give the best of ourselves.

As they celebrate their 34 years of service tonight, I would like to thank UPS and its dedicated team for the critically important work they are doing to improve and lift up the lives of those with special and challenging needs. Together, we are building a city where every New Yorker feels valued and supported.

Congratulations as well to this year's honorees.

I hope everyone has a wonderful time tonight!

Sincerely,

JULIE MENIN
Speaker



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
MARK D. LEVINE



Unique People Services
201 E. Burnside Avenue
Bronx, NY 10457

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to extend warm greetings and congratulations to everyone celebrating Unique People Services, Inc.'s 34th Anniversary Gala.

For 34 years, Unique People Services has provided compassionate housing and supportive services to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, HIV/AIDS, and other challenges. Through its commitment to dignity, stability, and independence, UPS has made a lasting difference in the lives of individuals and families throughout our city.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to this year's honorees and commend them for their dedication to strengthening our communities and serving others.

Once again, congratulations to Unique People Services, Inc. on this special anniversary, and best wishes for a wonderful celebration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Mark Levine in black ink.

Mark Levine
New York City Comptroller

DISTRICT OFFICE
573 East Fordham Road
(Entrance on Hoffman Street)
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 842-8100

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Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to extend warm greetings and congratulations to Unique People Services as you gather for your Annual Anniversary Gala.

For more than three decades, Unique People Services has been an important partner to communities across the Bronx and New York City, providing housing, mental health services, developmental disability programs, and other critical supports to New Yorkers who need them most. Your commitment to serving individuals with dignity, compassion, and without judgment reflects the very best of our borough.

As the Council Member representing the 15th District, I am especially grateful for UPS's continued investment in the Bronx. From providing supportive services to developing quality affordable and supportive housing, UPS is helping our neighbors achieve greater stability and independence while strengthening the communities they call home.

I commend Executive Director Yvette Brissett-André, the Board of Directors, staff, supporters, and partners whose dedication makes this work possible. I also congratulate this year's honorees and thank them for their commitment to our communities.

On behalf of the residents of the 15th Council District, congratulations to the entire Unique People Services family. I wish you a wonderful celebration and many more years of continued service to the Bronx and all of New York City.

Sincerely,
Oswald Feliz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Oswald Feliz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Council Member, 15th District
New York City Council

DISTRICT OFFICE
778 CASTLE HILL AVENUE
BRONX, NY 10473
TEL: (718) 792-1140
FAX: (718) 931-0235

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Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to extend warm greetings and congratulations to Unique People Services (UPS) as you gather for your Annual Gala.

For more than three decades, UPS has provided essential services to New Yorkers facing some of life's greatest challenges. Through its work with individuals living with HIV/ AIDS and mental illness, adults with developmental disabilities, young adults on the autism spectrum, and New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, UPS helps ensure that our neighbors have access to the care, stability, and support they need to thrive.

As the Council Member representing the 18th District and Co-Chair of the Bronx Delegation, I am especially proud that UPS is doing this important work right here in our community. Having trusted service providers embedded in our neighborhoods means that Bronx residents and their families can access critical resources and support close to home.

UPS's commitment to serving people holistically and without judgment reflects the values that make the Bronx strong: compassion, resilience, and a commitment to looking out for one another. Its dedicated staff works every day to help New Yorkers achieve greater independence and build more stable futures for themselves and their families.

On behalf of the residents of the 18th Council District, congratulations to the entire Unique People Services family. I wish you a wonderful celebration and many more years of service to the Bronx and the City of New York.

With warmest congratulations,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Amanda Farías".

Hon. Amanda Farías
Council Member, District 18
New York City Council



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Gives Best Wishes

To The Honorees:

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Bronx Borough President

Barbara Lehrer,
President & Founder, The Beacon Group

Dr. Lidia Virgil,
Chief Operating Officer, SOMOS Community Care

Ben Werzberger,
President, Building Envelope Solutions Inc.
and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC
Cleo W.

Headquarters



2050 Grand Concourse, Bronx

2050 Grand Concourse is a 13-story, approximately 87,000-square-foot, mixed-income/mixed-population development with 96 apartments, combining affordable housing, supportive housing and UPS headquarters. The project serves 58 supportive housing adults, and additional low- and moderate-income households; amenities include laundry opening to a landscaped terrace, a community room and landscaped roof terrace, bicycle storage, free Wi-Fi, and community/multipurpose space. Its publicly documented AMI structure includes 23 units for households below 60% AMI and 14 below 80% AMI. 2050 Grand Concourse opened in 2022.

Restoring Hope

Lynn's Place — 1060 Rev. James A. Polite Avenue, Bronx

Lynn's Place is UPS's first mixed-use affordable-housing development, a 69-unit, roughly seven-story residence serving people with serious mental illness as well as low-income individuals and families. The project includes 42 supportive-housing units and 27 affordable apartments, with studios, one- and two-bedroom apartments, a community room, elevators, laundry, resident parking, individually controlled heating/air conditioning, and landscaped courtyard/roof-garden space. The affordability target is 60% AMI or below; the supportive units are intended for people with mental illness and histories of homelessness. Lynn's Place opened in 2018.

1806 Anthony Avenue Apartments, Bronx

1806 Anthony Avenue is a planned nine-story, approximately 60,600-square-foot mixed-income/mixed-population building with 111 apartments, including supportive housing, senior housing and low-income family housing. UPS describes the program as 67 units for formerly homeless individuals referred through DOHMH, 36 units for low-income seniors, and seven low-income family units, with wraparound services such as financial-literacy, job-readiness and counseling programs. Planned amenities include free Wi-Fi, a community facility for UPS services, landscaped outdoor/community terraces, laundry and bicycle storage, with green roofs and potential future solar panels. The project is intended to serve low- and moderate-income households, which is consistent with Mayor Mamdani "Block by Block" plan. Construction began and anticipates opening in Summer 2028.



Building Homes

Undercliff Avenue — Bronx

Undercliff Avenue is the newest UPS development opportunity and is substantially earlier in the development process than the other four projects. On July 29, 2026, UPS and Brisa Builders acquired the Highbridge development site for \$9.1 million to develop the \$139.1 million project, with a construction loan closing anticipated in December 2028. The parcel is approximately 28,000 square feet and anticipate the all-electric building will offer approximately 209 affordable homes, including supportive housing for New Yorkers who were formerly homeless.

A. Keith Gordon Ogden Theatre Apartments - 1415 Ogden Avenue, Bronx

The A. Keith Gordon Ogden Theatre Apartments is an 85-unit, seven-story 100%-affordable development being co-developed by UPS and NCV Capital, with 51 supportive-housing units for formerly homeless individuals and 34 units for Section 8 residents and households at or below 60% AMI. Amenities include approximately 2,000 square feet of social-service space, indoor and outdoor recreation areas, laundry, bicycle parking, two elevators, and a resident superintendent; the building is designed to Passive House and Enterprise Green Communities standards and includes rooftop solar and all-electric systems. All 85 units are planned as affordable to households at 60% AMI or below, with supportive units receiving additional rental assistance/program subsidies. Construction began in early 2025, and an anticipate opening in Winter 2026/27. Project was funded \$1 M. through Reso A by tonight's Honoree Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President.



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How You Can Help

Your support can aid in the creation of quality, safe, and affordable homes that help New Yorkers make ends meet.

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You can also ask your friends, family, and business colleagues to make a contribution that is meaningful to them.

No gift is too small, and every gift is appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your support, and we look forward to creating quality, safe, and affordable homes that help New Yorkers make ends meet.

Visit our website at:
www.uniquepeopleservices.org to learn more.



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This wonderful evening could not have been achieved without the collaborative effort of the following individuals:

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34th Anniversary Gala Team

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Brian Halber, CPA
Chief Financial Officer and
Human Resources

Dean Grant,
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The Honorees:

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**Barbara Lehrer,
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**Dr. Lidia Virgil,
Chief Operating Officer, SOMOS Community Care**

**Ben Werzberger,
President, Building Envelope Solutions Inc.
and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC**

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34TH ANNUAL GALA

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CONGRATULATIONS TO UNIQUE PEOPLE SERVICES *on their 34 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!*

And for honoring our President,

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UNIQUE PEOPLE SERVICES ANNUAL GALA

OCTOBER 14, 2026

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Rendering of 1415 Ogden Ave, Bronx



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THANK YOU



Congratulations to
Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson
Ben Werzberger
Barbara Lehrer
and **Dr. Lidia Virgil**

for being honored for your
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BEN WERZBERGER
DR. LIDIA VIRGIL*

*AND
INDIVIDUAL of THE YEAR HONOREE*

CLEO W

*OUR BEST WISHES TO
Unique People Services*
For their continued success in the community

James E. Vassalotti III, R.A.

James E. Vassalotti III, Architects, P.C.
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Thank You Yvette Brissett-André



The Kesten Charitable Trust is Proud to Recognize and Support the Life Changing Mission Undertaken by Unique People Services, Inc., a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, Serving the Essential Needs of Deserving People with HIV/AIDS, Mental Illness, and Developmental Disabilities.

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WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION TO
UNIQUE PEOPLE SERVICES



To Yvette, Lisa, Aziza, and the entire Unique People Services team,

It is truly an honor to be recognized by an organization that is so deeply committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to each of you for your dedication, professionalism, and the tremendous work you do every day. Throughout our partnership, I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the passion and care that you bring to your mission. Your commitment goes far beyond providing housing and services— it is about giving people stability, dignity, opportunity, and hope.

Working together on 1806 Anthony Avenue has been a particularly meaningful experience. It has given me an even greater appreciation for the vision and dedication behind Unique People Services and for the people who work tirelessly to turn that vision into reality.

Yvette, Lisa, and Aziza, thank you for your guidance, your partnership, and the personal effort you have each put into making our work together successful. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me and for the strong relationship we have built along the way.

To the entire UPS team, thank you for the important work you do and for allowing me to be part of your mission. I am proud to stand alongside you and to celebrate the tremendous impact you continue to have on our community.

Congratulations to Unique People Services on this special evening, and thank you for everything you do. I look forward to many more years of partnership and shared accomplishments.

With sincere appreciation and warmest wishes,

Ben Werzberger

BEN WERZBERGER



CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR FOUNDER & LEADER,
BEN WERZBERGER

*The entire BuildingEnvelopeSolutions (BES) team is proud to celebrate Ben on receiving the **Building Futures Award** from Unique People Services.*

Ben's journey from a roofing and façade contractor to the President of Building Envelope Solutions and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC is a testament to his vision, determination, and commitment to building stronger communities.

Through his partnership with Unique People Services, Ben has helped advance the development of 1806 Anthony Avenue in the Bronx, bringing together his years of construction experience and his passion for real estate development to help create quality affordable and supportive housing.

We are grateful for his leadership, vision, and the opportunity to be part of the team he has built.

Congratulations, Ben!

*With appreciation and best wishes,
The Building Envelope Solutions Team*



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IN HONOR OF MY DEAR FRIEND & BUSINESS PARTNER, BEN WERZBERGER

Ben,

It is a privilege to celebrate you on this well-deserved honor from **Unique People Services**.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to know you not only as a close friend and business partner, but also as someone who approaches every challenge with determination, vision, and a genuine desire to make a difference.

From your roots in the roofing and façade industry to your success in construction and real estate development, you have built far more than buildings—you have built lasting relationships, opportunities, and a reputation based on hard work and integrity.

I am especially proud of the work we have accomplished together and of your partnership with **Unique People Services**, helping bring meaningful housing and community development to life.

Congratulations, Ben! I am proud to call you my friend and business partner, and I look forward to many more years of friendship, partnership, and success together.

**With friendship and admiration,
Shiye Freund**

IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR HUSBAND & FATHER, BEN WERZBERGER

We are so incredibly proud of you and this special recognition.

Your dedication, hard work, and commitment to making a difference in the lives of others inspire us every day. We are blessed to watch you pursue your dreams while always putting your family and those around you first.

You have built so much throughout your career, but what makes us most proud is the person you are—you're generous, determined, integrity, and the way you care for the people around you.

We are grateful for everything you do for our family and for the positive impact you continue to make in the community.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor! We love you and are so proud of you. May the years ahead bring you continued happiness, good health, and success in everything you do.

**With all our love,
Your Wife & Children**



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**GOLDSTEIN HALL CONGRATULATES
BEN WERZBERGER
ON RECEIVING THE BUILDING FUTURES
AWARD AT THE 2026 UPS
ANNIVERSARY GALA.**

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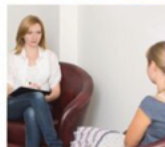
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IN HONOR OF BEN WERZBERGER

The Ader Group is proud to join Unique People Services in honoring Ben Werzberger with the **Building Futures Award**.

It has been a pleasure working alongside Ben and his team in connection with the development of **1806 Anthony Avenue in the Bronx**, a project focused on creating quality affordable and supportive housing for the community.

We have had the opportunity to see firsthand Ben's commitment to the project, his dedication to making the development a reality, and his vision for creating meaningful housing opportunities for those who need them most.

We congratulate Ben on this well-deserved recognition and are proud to have been part of this important project.

Congratulations, Ben, and best wishes for continued success in all your future endeavors!

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Congratulations

to **Yvette Brissett-Andre**
and the entire team at
Unique People Services, Inc.
on your 34th Anniversary
and to all of the 2026 honorees!

Constance Brown-Bellamy
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Yvette Brissett-André, MPA, Executive Director

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Dr. Klonette Johnson, EdD, LCSW, MPH, SiFi, CASAC-T
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2026 UPS Honorees

UPS Community Award

Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson,
Bronx Borough President



Lynn Wonsang Award

Barbara Lehrer, President &
Founder, The Beacon Group



Brick of Change Award

Dr. Lidia Virgil, Chief Operating
Officer, SOMOS Community Care



Building Futures Award

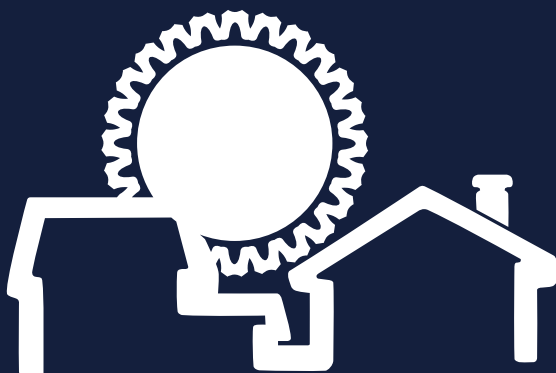
Ben Werzberger, President,
Building Envelope Solutions Inc.
and BW Anthony Ave Holdings LLC



Individual of the Year

Cleo W.





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